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May 12, 2022

Hon. Charles F. Sams III  
Director  
National Park Service  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

**Re: Support for the anticipated application from the Buffalo and Erie County Naval and Military Park under the National Maritime Heritage Grant Program**

Dear Mr. Sams:

You are no doubt aware of the partial sinking of the USS The Sullivans in the Inner Harbor of Buffalo, NY on Thursday, April 14, 2022, and the heroic and ultimately successful efforts by the ship's non-profit stewards, federal and local agencies, and their contractor partners to raise the ship safely in the subsequent weeks.

Over recent years it became apparent that this ship would require substantial investment in order to stay afloat, and last spring the Buffalo and Erie County Naval and Military Park reached out to the local community for financial help. The local community responded generously with more than \$1 million in contributions. It is important that the federal government also participate meaningfully in the financing of the repairs to this significant piece of U.S. naval history, and that is why I write today.

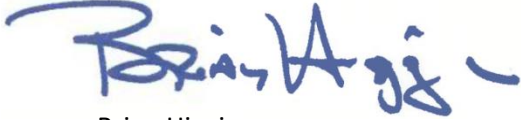
I have been a leading Congressional proponent of the National Maritime Heritage Grant Program, first as the author of the amendment which authorized the program in 2019 and subsequently as an advocate of the program's funding. As such, I was gratified to see your agency's announcement this week that the National Maritime Heritage Grant Program was soliciting requests for grants up to \$750,000 to accomplish the program's mission. You can be certain that the preservation of USS The Sullivans, and the other vessels maintained by the Buffalo and Erie County Naval and Military Park, the USS Little Rock and the USS Croaker, are exactly consistent with Congress' intent when this program was authorized and funded.

I anticipate that the Buffalo and Erie County Naval and Military Park will soon make application in response to your solicitation under this program, in order to fund the preservation of the decommissioned vessels under their care. Given the events of the last few months, especially the

extraordinary efforts that were made to save the USS The Sullivans, I must tell you that any decision not to fund the forthcoming application would be met with widespread disappointment. I am pleased and excited to commend this application to you.

Thank you very much for your leadership role in the preservation of the historic resources of the United States, including those which will enjoy support under the National Maritime Heritage Grant Program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Higgins" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress